



19371 *Hutton*
COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
WASHINGTON D.C. 20548

September 1, 1981

B-170612
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The Honorable Richard Bolling
Chairman, Committee on Rules
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This responds to your request for our views on H.R. 2, the Sunset Act of 1981, and H.R. 58, the Sunset Review Act of 1981, proposals to improve congressional review of Federal programs. We testified before the Subcommittee on Legislative Process on identical bills introduced during the last Congress (H.R. 2 and H.R. 5858, 96th Congress) on May 23, 1979, and November 29, 1979. Our general views on these bills have not changed since that time. We continue to support efforts to establish procedures which will enable congressional commitment to better oversight to be translated into action as efficiently and systematically as possible.

Current congressional budget reconciliation and reduction efforts only reinforce our view that the Congress would benefit by adopting reformed oversight procedures. Such procedures would enable committees to acquire better information on the performance of programs and to make better informed decisions. Such procedures will also enable our Office to assist the Congress more effectively in its oversight and legislative work:

- a review schedule will provide us with a better basis to focus our review and analytical efforts to coincide with congressional oversight agenda;
- statements of legislative objectives for programs will provide us with better criteria for assessing how well programs are working and whether alternative approaches may offer greater promise;
- establishing periodic performance reporting requirements for the executive agencies will enable us to avoid the costs we often incur of developing basic performance information ourselves; and
- committee review plans will enable us to better tailor our studies to the specific needs of committees.

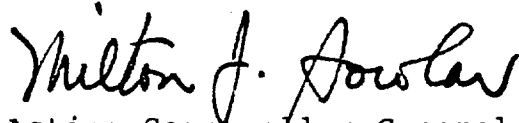
I am enclosing a copy of a summary of our observations on oversight reform which we prepared after our earlier testimony

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before your committee. We appreciate the opportunity to comment again on these important measures, and would be happy to further assist you and the Subcommittee in any way that we can.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Milton J. Fowler".

Acting Comptroller General
of the United States

Enclosure